

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY
C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 332.

FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 11, 1895.

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FOR THE WEEK ENDING MAY 11, 1895.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

A Remarkable Episode

WHY shouldn't I look back on that night long ago? There are some bits of memory that gladden the waste of years; one can't help dreaming of them now and then in a foolish, haphazard sort of way. No matter what that night led to (for it was then we met her), I cannot hold it accountable for evil, it was just a compound of delights, forming one delicious whole.

We were young then, and I think I can say without egotism that both of us had excellent dispositions—frank, ardent, devoted.

That row on the river by moonlight, and the dance afterwards! There was a waltz of Strauss so divinely rendered that the memory of it electrifies the subtle machinery of these legs that now, alas! dance no more. I whistle it bar for bar; I shut my eyes, and hold again in a light embrace my fair young sylph in blue. Her golden hair escapes from its silken mesh, floats down upon her white shoulders, her little ungloved, gem-covered hands softly rest in mine, and round and round we whirl to the measure of that waltz.

Ah, me! The adolescence of passion for poor Phil began also upon that night, and it is with that we have to do. I saw him, dimly of course, and with that reflected light that glances from one's own happiness sometimes to that of another near and dear to him—I saw him walking through the corridors, lingering in some alcove, or appearing and disappearing through the arches of the masonry upon the balcony, always with the one Juno-like figure, tall and pliant, yet free, rich, mature.

Even with the fascination of whatever fair one shared the moment with me, I could not help noticing the seductive beauty of Phil's partner, and acknowledged to myself she surpassed any of the beauties there.

Not like my fragile blossom, the nymph in blue, or the pale, delicate, lily-like creature in white that seemed my second fancy, these were in the first bloom of youth, and naturally lacked many of the charms that would come to them after a succession of seasons in society.

The graceful ease of her manner, the wonderful skill in imparting this ease to those brought in to the magnetism of her

presence, indicated that the lady who hung upon Phil's arm, and whom he introduced to me as Miss Diana Davenport, was an acknowledged queen in society.

It was plain to be seen that Phil was completely subjugated, enthralled. There was a subdued rapture in his voice, a latent passion in his eye, an abstracted tenderness in his manner, that told me at once it was a serious case with Phil.

Thus began this important era in the life of my friend, and before a fortnight it had reached a grand climacterie, a state of subdued frenzy, which rendered everything subservient to it.

He walked with her, rode with her; the pleasant and capacious house owned by her widowed mother in the suburbs became haunted by his presence. Hosts of people went there and enjoyed the genial hospitality graciously dispensed, but it began to be acknowledged that Phil was the favourite visitor. It was noticeable that Miss Davenport took the trouble to invent excuses to enjoy Phil's society and that was a rare, in fact, an unknown thing in the catholic proclivities of the heiress.

Phil began to wear that toned down, domestic mien that augured ill for our bachelor aspirations. He cut off the ends of his moustache, and religiously shaved himself every day, while his toilet occupied twice as long. He took an interest in investments, and watched the market as behoved a family man.

Smoking one night in my room, with my feet raised to a comfortable altitude on the window-sill, pondering upon many things, and last of how I should look as best man at Phil's wedding, I was suddenly startled by the entrance of Phil himself.

He burst into the room, flung his hat in one corner, his cane in another, and sinking into a chair, covered his face with his hands and gave vent to a groan of half-suppressed agony.

"Why, Phil," I said, hastening over to him, "are you hurt? Has any accident occurred?"

I looked at him from head to foot, half expecting to see the blood flow from a recent wound.

"There are no limbs broken, Hal," he said looking up with a face so distorted and pale I scarcely knew it for his own:



Miss Diana Davenport.



To enjoy Phil's society.

moment of my life. It is more than I can bear, old fellow."

"Can nothing be done?" I asked.

"Nothing," he answered, with an accent of despair. "Only let us get away from here as soon as possible; let us hasten our old plans for travel. I beg of you, Hal, put as many miles between me and her as you can."

A fortnight afterwards we were upon the ocean. I had, after all, reached my old desire to be out of sight and sensation of land, and watch with Phil the sun rising upon a boundless, trackless waste of water. But half the delight of it was gone. I was defrauded of the symmetry and fulness of a communion with Phil because of his imbecile idolatry for a woman I could not admire.

I could have forgiven a chit of a girl, like my nymph in blue or the little lily in white; I might have reconciled myself to the thought that it was a mistake of impulse and feeling; but I could not be brought to believe that a beautiful veteran, with campaigns of stratagems and spoils for her experience, could be unconsciously guilty of murdering the heart and soul of a being so devoted to her.

I accused her in my heart as a cold-blooded, detestable coquette, who revelled in this prey as a gourmand delights in his *pâté de foie gras*, unmindful of the agony of which it is composed.

We went direct with a party of hunters and explorers to the heart of Africa; but, lost amidst this wilderness of nature, forcing our way step by step through dense forests of underwood, camping upon verdant prairies, or galloping over the desert, with its burned-brown grass and desolate monotony, ever and always there rested upon Phil's brow the melancholy mien of one absorbed by a bitter memory.

One night we sat outside the tents, Phil and I, and smoked long and contemplatively. It was oppressively hot, and, as the hours wore away, the southern constellations came on in such force that the vast extent of country was illumined as far as the horizon, and Phil, picking up an old newspaper dropped by one of our companions, declared he could read it word for word.

He held it to his eyes for a moment, then dropped it, and started to his feet, looking about him as if bewildered.

"only the heart. Hal, I have got my death blow. Diana belongs to another!"

"Married!" I gasped.

"Just the same. She's been engaged to a colonel in the army for two years. They are to be married this autumn."

"Why, what a monstrous——" But Phil put his hand on my arm.

"Don't, Hal," he said, pleadingly. "I can't bear it; besides I think she scarcely knew the danger we were in till it was too late. I believe she loves me, Hal, as I love her; as I shall always love her to the last

"What is it, Phil?" I cried.

He sank back upon the smooth bit of alkali that served him for a seat, picked up the newspaper again and read, in a trembling voice, that Colonel John Talbot had been killed in the hunting field by a fall from his horse.

"That's rather unlucky for Talbot," I remarked; "but I can't really see how it affects us."

"Colonel Talbot," repeated Phil in an impressive whisper, "is the man whom Diana was engaged to."

"A widow," I murmured.

Phil looked at the date of the newspaper and found it had been printed only a fortnight after we left England.

He dashed his hand to his forehead; a malediction escaped his lips.

"I might, after all, have been best man," I remarked.

Nothing now would do but to take up the thread of life for Phil where it was so rudely snapped asunder.

"All these months of travel, Hal," he said, with the peculiar selfishness of a lover, "have been merely existence for me, not life. Let me go back, my friend, to the air that is shared by Diana."

This was all very well, and would have been extremely apposite had we been upon any common or even distinguished line of travel. We might have put ourselves upon the lady's trail in the twinkling of an eye, taken a night train, embarked in a steamer, or even joined a caravan upon the desert. But our companions had not started with any such clog as an unsatisfied passion.

To go to them and relate this pathetic story of Phil's, and the vivid importance it was to him to breathe another air, would only be to subject ourselves to ridicule and defeat. They would shrug their shoulders with disdain, and stolidly refuse to understand; perhaps they would tell us that, in the following week, there would be a hunt for hippopotami from eight to ten feet long, and that, although there were plenty of fish in the sea and lovely women at home, all ready for the snare of the fowler, pachyderms of this description were wary in the extreme, and desperate when brought to bay; therefore the hunt and subsequent capture held the peculiar and irresistible charms of danger and rarity.

Phil was obliged to submit to destiny. Life was dearer to him than it had been of late, and he was not prepared to strike off into the wilderness alone. I noticed he was, for the first time, prudent in the hunt on the following day, and that he began to make a virtue of patience. For my part I was sorry for Phil, but, nevertheless, the pachyderms had a wonderful fascination about them.

After the pachyderms came lions, which were not quite so interesting, for various reasons. In the first place I had seen



Smoking one night in my room.

so many lions in menageries and shows of all kinds, and a lion isn't half so nice in some positions as in a cage.

For instance, suppose you are idiot enough to join a party of madmen who track these animals to a defile in the mountains, and attack them, as you might say, with their foot upon their native heath; and get just a little simple tap with one of their claws that breaks your collar-bone, lays open your cheek, pulls down the skin of your forehead over your eyes, and smashes your right arm in two places. It seems to me natural to prefer looking at them from behind a good stout railing, with the demoralisation of captivity on their side.

At all events, poor Phil had to nurse me for many a long month after that lion hunt, and it was well into the following year when we at last found ourselves on a P. and O. steamer, bound for home.

Phil and I were old travellers by this time, and the wild freshness of enthusiasm that seized upon some of our fellow-voyagers as they neared their native shore was with us toned down to a calm but profound conviction that England was the only country in the world worth the rational affection of an experienced and cultivated mind.

I had been looking through the glass for some time and was just handing it over to a fellow passenger, who had eyed me with devouring envy the while, when a big steamer, outward bound, glided close by our side, and I could see the faces of the party nearest me.

One fleeting glance of mine contained a revelation. I glued my eyes to the glass again. Exactly opposite me there shone two glowing orbs wonderfully familiar. The face was one not easily forgotten, the form full, shapely, with a peculiar serpentine grace about it.

"Phil," I said, putting the glass into his hand, "look over there at that group of ladies."

He took it languidly, but, having looked, a quick, eager gasp escaped him; he dropped the glass into the hands of our envious fellow passenger, and seized my arm with a sudden frenzy.

"She is going out," he said.

"While we, alas! are going in," I added.

"But this is monstrous," he added in dismay. "We can't go in, we must follow her."

Here again was the absurdity of a foolish passion. It would have been useless to relate to the captain that my friend, seeing a person he was interested in on the passing steamer, would like to join her. It was impossible to throw a plank across the ocean; besides, she was already vanishing out of sight, and Phil rushed below like a madman. All we could do was to enquire her destination from the Company's offices, take an outbound passage once again, and sail as soon as possible.

I confess it began to wear the aspect of a chase to me, and appealed to my taste for hunting. Then, I suppose, beauty such as hers, seen through a strong glass, had an effect of nearness upon me. At all events I began to take a keen interest in the passion of my friend. When we reached Cairo, however, we learned she had gone back to Europe via Brindisi.

All we could do was to travel about the Continent in the hope of encountering her or hearing about her party.

One fine autumn morning we lingered on the heights of a mountain resort in Saxony. We leaned over the railing that incloses the plateau on the top of the mountain, and looked admiringly down upon the stretch of country beneath. Upon the river Elbe, that looked to our eyes like a trout stream, we saw one of those little Dutch steamers that continually paddle up and down, and suddenly the view became intensely interesting. I looked through the glass again; yes, there she was, without doubt more graceful and enchanting than ever, upon the deck of that lumbering little tug, fathoms below us. I called to Phil. He bent, he looked, and stretching over with a yearning, unsteady movement, he lost his balance and fell.

Fell down the sheer edge of the rock, grasping as he went at every tuft of lichen and grass, at every shrub that rapidly shot out of his reach. I watched him with agonised suspense, when suddenly his coat caught upon the jagged wall of the precipice, and held him suspended over the chasm beneath.



"She is going out," he said.

He was partly supported by a frail ledge beneath him, and to this bit of rock I was determined to descend if in the endeavour I lost my life. There was no other way of saving Phil—none whatever; it must be done immediately, and he who has risked his life in mad encounters with savage beasts can surely afford to do so in behalf of the friend of his soul.

Round me flocked a crowd of sturdy Germans anxious to help me in every possible way. A stout rope was brought, fastened firmly about my waist; and I was lowered, a hand-breadth at a time, by my honest friends above. At last my foot trembled upon the thin piece of slate upon which Phil rested.

Grasping the rope with one hand, I disengaged his unconscious form from its perilous resting place, slipped slowly into the position he had taken, and binding the rope about my poor Phil, I had the joy to see him finally lifted into the arms of my comrades above.

Loud shouts arose from the plateau, and were echoed from the little steamer below, from the deck of which my perilous undertaking had been watched with intense interest. With difficulty I succeeded in keeping my hold upon this ledge of the precipice until the rope came back for me, and when I bound it about my waist I had already experienced that fatal giddiness that precedes unconsciousness.

Reaching the top, I escaped from the embrace of my Teutonic friends, and made my way to the chamber in the hostelry where they had taken Phil. A doctor was already with him, and declared that, although there were no bones broken, his system had received a nervous shock, and that he would need careful nursing.

So I took my place by the side of Phil, and nursed him in Germany as he had ministered to me in Africa. He got well sooner than I did, but modesty compels me to say it was not because of better nursing. His collar-bone and right arm were not smashed, neither had he the skin torn direct from the scalp over his eyes—which leads me to the opinion that a collision with a rock is less formidable than one with a lion.

Then there were better facilities for nursing in the pretty Saxony town than in the heart of Africa, and besides, I wasn't the only nurse he had; a lady travelling in the vicinity kindly aided me. She was not altogether a stranger to Phil—nor to me, for that matter.

She was very gentle and beautiful, with that winning way

about her that reaches the heart, magnetises it, enthalls it, without the exact knowledge of that organ.

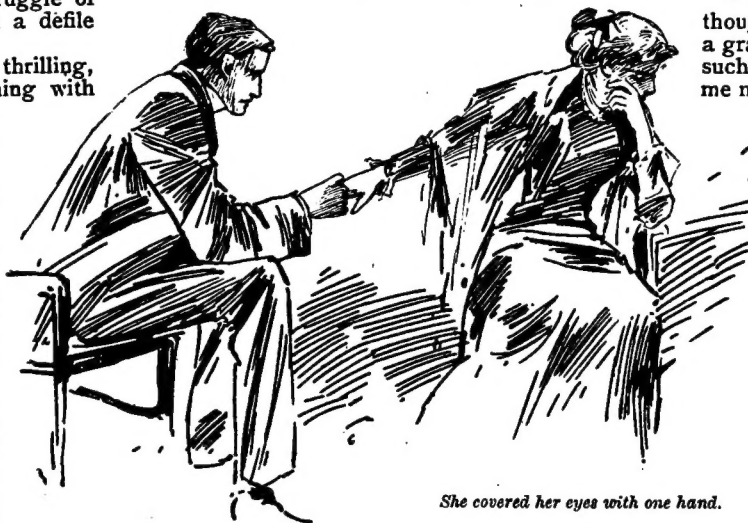
There was something in the slight pressure of her hand upon Phil's forehead, the floating of her diaphanous drapery about his bedside, the melody of her voice, the soft gleaming of her luminous eyes through the dimmed light of the sick room, that made her presence consoling, healing, divine.

Then when Phil had fallen into a slumber she came to me, her fellow-watcher, and ministered to my comfort through the dark watches of the night. She listened with tender interest to my relation of our adventures in Africa, and was especially never tired of a terrible struggle of mine with a male lion in a defile of the mountains.

She declared that it was thrilling, grand, heroic, and, touching with her slender fingers the scars upon my face, pronounced them beautiful; while I, alas! caught and kissed those gentle fingers and wished that Phil's convalescence were not so rapid, and that we might for ever—we three—rest together upon the verdure-crowned heights, "like gods together, heedless of mankind."

On one of those occasions I was relating to her a desperate encounter of ours in the jungle with a panther, and had reached the most thrilling part of it; she covered her eyes with one hand, as if to shut out the terrible scene, and the other she stretched in sympathy with my relation to the combat.

Absorbed with my story, I just touched the white finger to my lips with a caressing movement, when suddenly Phil stood before us. He was pale to ghastliness, and my heart smote me, for I saw in his face a bitter hatred and reproach. He glared at me with hollow, burning eyes. But Diana rose to her feet. Taking the light shawl from her shoulders, she threw it about the shivering form of Phil, and gently forced him to the seat beside her.



She covered her eyes with one hand.

"You wicked boy!" she said, looking upon him in tender reproach, "how can you be so imprudent? We want no relapses, you know, for I must leave you to-morrow. The Colonel will be here."

"The Colonel!" stammered Phil. "What colonel?"

"Why, my colonel," said Diana, "Colonel John Talbot, my husband!"

Phil seemed to have lost all power of articulation, and my own voice sounded strange and hollow, as I remarked that we were under the impression Colonel John Talbot had been killed years ago in the hunting field.

"Why, what a horrible thought!" said Mrs. Talbot, with a graceful shudder. "There was such a report, and it nearly cost me my life, but happily it was an exaggeration. He was badly bruised and carried home for dead. But you know," she added, turning to me, "how much a manly, athletic physique can stand."

"Yes, yes," I murmured, and as she bade us good-night and glided away, Phil and I looked at each other with an emotion that was impossible just then to analyse.

We remained in sombre silence, watching the jagged snow-covered peaks of the distant hills. At last our hands sought each other, a shiver of re-

collection passed over the weak form of Phil, his head sank upon my shoulder.

"Let's go home, Hal," he whispered. "Let's get back to England."

We left Saxony the next day, travelling by easy stages to the coast. And it is somewhat remarkable that, although both Phil's and my experience with women was limited and unsatisfactory, we never sought to extend our knowledge or ameliorate the paucity of it.

We never married, nor saw Diana from that day to this.

THE CABMAN'S STORY.

It was a fearful night!

All the evening the rain had been coming down in torrents—at times whirled by the wind into perfect sheets of water—forming big puddle lakes in the road, and miniature rivers in the gutters.

The two miserable cab horses on the rank looked soaked through—the steam rising from their reeking sides—as they stood nodding in the downpour, the harness shining from excess of moisture. In the corner public-house the two drivers were seated at a small table—smoking, drinking, and chatting with a few of the "regulars" who had defied the elements, rather than go without their usual nightly jorum.

Rum hot was the "complaint" of the cabbies, and the soothing liquor had opened their hearts and set their tongues wagging.

"Dooky Jim," the acknowledged "smart-un" of the rank, was in good form, and rattled off anecdote after anecdote to the pleasure and careful listening of the select few.

The rain still continued to pour down, and, unmindful of the poor beasts out in the wet, the glasses were replenished and Jim started on one of his long yarns.

"I'll tell you a story," he commenced, "of what happened to me when I first started on the road. I was a young chap then, but I drove my own lot, and a good show it was. I remember it was in the afternoon of a day something like this one, raining blessed hard, and no chance of clearing up, and, what was worse, I hadn't earned a bob all the time.

"I was getting pretty sick of it, and had just made up my mind to take the horse home, when I saw a gent coming down the road full pelt.

"Are you disengaged?" said he coming up to me.

"Yes, sir!" says I.

"Well, then, jump up, and drive sharply to Alcester Square," and in he pops out of the rain.

"Well, I reckoned the bad weather meant a bit extra, and

the fare looked one of these pasty faced swells with brass, so off I goes in good spirits.

"At the corner of Alcester Square he got out, telling me to wait, and then went into one of the big houses; and, d'ye know, I thought he had a strange look on his white dial. But I got down and waited in the rain, and after about ten minutes, out he comes again, looking whiter than ever, and stops me from mounting the box.

"Have you change for a sovereign?" said he.

"No, sir," says I; but that wasn't true, chaps, for I always held a bit of ready in those days.

"Well, do you mind getting the change for me?" said the gent—"I'll stand by the horse while you're gone."

"Well, it seemed a funny thing to ask a cabman to do; but I went round the corner with his quid—where he couldn't see me—and counted out the silver in my pocket.

"I knew I mustn't go back too quickly or it would give me away—so, after a bit, I just popped my head round the corner to see how my nag was going on.

"Well, what I saw gave me a bit of a turn!—

"Two men were carrying somebody in their arms down to my cab, the gent holding the door open.

"I waited until they had got the person in and shut the door, and then, seeing my fare lay hold of the reins, I guessed he meant going off without me, so round I came like lightning and stood at my horse's head.

"Ah! there you are, cabby," said Mr. White-face—which was now turning red—"we are quite ready, and I want you to drive as quickly as possible to Merton Fields," and he stood waiting for me to get up before he went inside the cab.

Here "Dooky Jim" shifted his position, recrossed his legs, and then commenced slowly filling his pipe.

"Well, chaps," he went on in jerks, "I tell you it was a funny-looking job, and I didn't much care about it, but I remembered he hadn't asked for his quid's worth of change—and I hoped he'd forgot it—and I give you my word I wasn't a-going to remind him.

"So I started off down the Alcester Road, through the rain, which was still coming down.

"Once, going across the common, I heard the sound of voices from inside, and something like a muffled scream, that gave me a bit of a start, but I thought I'd better go on and see it all out.

"After about three-quarters of an hour I arrived at the Fields, and pulled up sharp, intending to get down and ask for directions.

"But Mr. White-face was too smart for me, the window came down with a bang and out popped his head.

"There's no need to stop, cabman," he shouted—"drive straight over to that large house with the tall trees in front, go straight inside the gates," and up went the window again, but not before I had time to hear a gurgling sound come from inside.

"Well, what game's this?" thinks I; but don't you see, chaps, I had to think of the merry quid inside my pocket—and, besides, what could I have done?

"Over I went to the house with the big trees, and drove through the gates into the grounds, pulling up at the door, on which there was a big plate with the name 'Dr. Thurston.'

"I tell you the sight of that plate gave me a little relief, so I jumped down to open the cab door, but the gent was again too sharp for me, for he was outside, and holding the handle.

"Stand at your horse's head, cabman," he said sharply; "and don't let it move. You understand?"

"At that moment the doctor's door opened, and out came two porters, and a woman dressed like a nurse, so off I hurried to the nag's bridle.

"But as they brought the person out of my cab I had a good look, and saw it was a pale young lady, with such a haggard face! She was a-going on and crying out loudly, 'Cabman, cabman, don't let them take me in!'

"The sight fairly upset me, but I felt the gent's eyes were on me, as the porters carried the lady into the house, he looking back as he followed with the nurse.

"I didn't quite know what to do—whether I should wait or skip it with the brass, but somehow I waited on.

"In a few minutes out came one of the porters and gave me another quid, telling me as how the gent wouldn't want me any longer.

"I suppose I must have looked a bit scared, for the man grinned at me, and whispered in my ear, 'You needn't be frightened; this is a private madhouse; but I suppose the gent didn't tell you, in case you wouldn't take the fare'; and he went in, grinning more than ever."

The narrator made a big pause here, looked mysteriously at his interested audience, and finished up his glass, which was immediately replenished by one of the company.

"Look sharp, and get on with it, Jim," said his pal, "blow'd it if it ain't like a detective story."

"Dooky Jim" cleared his throat, had a turn at the fresh liquor, and got on with it.

"Well, chaps, I tell you straight, it didn't take me long to get away from that hole. I put the nag at it, all across that common; and how he did go, just as if he'd only just commenced the journey. He was a good-un, and no error; but there, I always reckoned I knew a bit about cattle, and you can stand on me to put you right at the game.

"Well, on the way back I kept on thinking of that poor girl, and wondering why, if she was mad, that she could know I was a cabman, for she did say right out, 'Cabman, cabman, don't let them take me in.'

"When I had come about halfway home, I felt somehow as if I must have a look inside the cab, so I pulled up in a quiet spot, and got down and opened the door.

"It seemed all right inside—and, mind you, I don't know what made me do it—but I pulled up the cushions, and there was a piece of paper slip'd down at the back. On it was written, 'To the coachman.'" (Here Jim dived down into his breast-coat pocket, and brought out a big letter case, from which he extracted a dirty bit of paper, creased, and yellow with age, which he held up to the company.) "And here, chaps, is the very note to prove to you that I'm not telling lies."

He read:

"DEAR SIR,—I am writing this by my bedside, with the hope that it will be found in your conveyance, for I know they are going to take me away to-day to an asylum. They will tell you I am mad, but, for the love of Heaven, do not believe them. Listen to the prayer of a poor woman, and find out Captain Hall, telling him that I, his wife, am detained by these wretches. Go first of all to No. — Wigmore Street, but don't trust a soul—they are all in league against me. See the Captain in person, and tell him what they have done with me. And may heaven bless you for your kindness."

Here the letter was carefully refolded and placed in Jim's letter case.

"Well; this note kept me awake all that night," he continued, "but by the morning I had decided to find out Captain Hall, at any cost.

"So about 11 o'clock I started off to Wigmore Street, and knocked at the door of the house.

"A servant answered me, and finding that I wanted the Captain, asked me to walk inside and wait in the hall. Soon she came back and told me to walk upstairs, so up I went after her, stopping at a back room which she asked me to enter.

"You can guess I was a bit nervous about the job, but I was fairly flabbergasted to find, not a stranger, but the white-faced gent inside and waiting for me.

"Well, my man," said he, pretending not to remember me; but I knew that was a lie by the uneasy look on his face—"What can I do for you?"

"I want to see Captain Hall, and nobody else," said I straight out.

"Well, I am Captain Hall," said he, and then seeing the door was open he crossed the room and shut it, and do you know I thought I heard the rustle of a woman's dress outside, as if someone had been listening.

"Then he came back and sat down by the window, and I noticed his face was whiter than ever."

"Now, then, what is it you want to say to me; come, speak out," said he.

"I tell you I don't want to see *you*. I want to see another Captain Hall, and if he isn't in I'll go away," said I.

"Not so fast, my friend," and he got up and stood against the door. "Now, then, tell me the meaning of your coming into my house and the business you want, or I'll send for the police and have you locked up."

"Well, here was a pretty go! I was in a fine mess, for sure, but I didn't budge an inch, you bet. I simply told him I was quite ready to go to the station, and perhaps there they would tell me if he really was Captain Hall.

"That made him wince a bit, chaps. He stood there and gnawed his moustache with rage; then he went back to his seat, his body trembling, his face like death.

"I recognise you now," he said; "you are the cabman who drove my poor sister over to Merton Fields, and you have come here to get money out of me—to blackmail me—or let everybody know that insanity is in my family, in fact to disgrace me. Well, I must buy up the secret, at any price, so let me know what you want—"

"Your sister!" I said, and then I remembered that I might do harm by letting my tongue run, so I simply added, "Look here, sir; I've not come for your money, and if you gents do such scurvy things, we honest working men are above it," and then I made my way downstairs, and out of the house as fast as I could go.

"I had just turned the corner of the street when I heard somebody running after me, and a middle-aged old girl, dressed like a servant, came panting up.

"I must have a word with you," she gasped out. "Come anywhere, so long as they don't see us together."

"Well, I didn't know what to make of it, but I dropped into the first pub handy and called for some brandy for the woman, and a drop of beer for myself.

"The stuff seemed to pull her together, but I noticed she was still very excited, and crying fit to break her heart.

"She told me she had listened outside the door and heard me ask for Captain Hall, and then the white-faced gent said he was the Captain.

"But it's a lie," said she, "don't believe him."

"You bet I'm not going to, missis," said I, and then I thought to myself, supposing the gent had set this woman after me to pump me. So I was on my guard at once.

"I was hoping you had news of my dear mistress, Captain Hall's wife, and I hurried after you to find out," said she. "They say she ran away with another man, but I know it ain't true, I know her better than that. But the Captain believes it, and is going abroad, and I feel sure that brute, Mr. Mearns, is the cause of it all. If the Captain dies, and my mistress is put out of the way, that wretch comes into all the money, because he is the only cousin. Tell me, oh, do tell me, if you know anything about my poor, young mistress!"

"Well, this sounded straight enough, but I thought I'd better hold on a bit, so I said to her:

"Look here, what I know I'm not agoing to tell anybody, but mean well, trust me. Just you give me the Captain's address, and I'll go and see him myself."

"That I will, and with pleasure," said she; "but do please go quickly, or it will be too late. He starts to-night from Southampton to join his regiment in India; anybody on board will point him out to you; he went away last week to stay with a friend who is living at Cowes."

"Well, I took all this down very carefully, and then said good morning to the dame and started by the first train to Southampton—landing there in the evening.

"Now, thought I, what's the best thing to do to find my man? So in I turned to a little pub to think matters over.

"As luck would have it, there I came across an old pal of mine, who had enlisted when I was a youngster.

"The very man I want, Jack," said I, as soon as we'd shaken hands and had a drink together. "Can you help me to find a Captain Hall, who sails to-night for India? I've got something very important to say to him; I can't write it, I must see him."

"I can put you on to that gent, at once," said he, "he

came over this afternoon from Cowes, and is up at the Hotel with some other officers."

"Well, Jack Summers, my soldier pal, and I went down to the Hotel in quick time, and sent up word to the Captain, who was with his friends in a private room. Down came the message that the Captain could not be disturbed, and I was to tell the servant what I wanted.

"Please tell Captain Hall I *must* see him for a minute before he sails"; and this time I didn't mean to be done, so I quietly followed the man up the stairs, and waited outside the room door.

"I heard my message given, and then a voice, which I immediately recognised as belonging to Mr. White-face, say, 'Tell the man to come again to-morrow morning.'

"Don't be absurd, Lionel," said another voice, 'you know I shan't be here then.'

"Well, I didn't wait to hear any more. I pushed open the door and went straight into the room, and shouted out 'Captain Hall!'

"What the deuce do you mean by coming here and shouting out my name like that?" said a gentleman standing over by the fireplace.

"Captain Hall, sir," said I, 'I have a message for you; it won't take a minute, but it is very important, sir.'

"Look here," said the white-faced gent, 'we object to this intrusion, get out of it, or I'll put you out—'

"You put me out?" I shouted, 'a scurvy thing like you!' and I pushed him bang up against the wall, and went over to the gent at the fireplace.

"I've got a message for you, Captain Hall, from your poor wife. Let me tell it you, and then you can have me thrown out if you like."

"No sooner had I said that than the Captain laid hold of me by my collar—his eyes glistening with excitement and his teeth set.

"Tell me what you mean. What do you know of my wife? Come, tell me quickly, or I'll break every bone in your body!" and he shook me as he nearly screamed the words out.

"I told him all—of the carrying off of the poor girl to the mad-house; of my finding the letter in the cab, and my visit to Wigmore Street; and then I brought out the note she had written and which I showed to you chaps to-night.

"He recognised her writing at once, and then seemed to believe my story, for he sat down and cried just like a child. Well, the sight upset me and all the other gents there, and I couldn't stop a tear that trickled down my nose.

"After a while he pulled round, and then he asked me if I knew who had done this work.

"That man there," said I, turning round to point at the white-faced gent, but he had cleared out quietly, while I was talking to the Captain.

"Well, chaps, to cut a long story short, the Captain didn't go to India after all—I suppose officers can do as they like in the Army—but went straight up to London with me and on to Merton Fields.

"I shall never forget the sight when those two people met each other; it turned my heart over and over again.

"Of course, I wasn't forgotten, and, in fact, every Christmas I always receive a big hamper and a bit of 'oof,' with their united love."

HOME NOTES.

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JACK DAVIS—A BAD LOT!

A STORY OF THE INDIAN MUTINY.

WHETHER it had been born in him or whether it was the fault of an obtuse fate they never knew; but one and all agreed that Jack Davis was "a bad lot."

Certainly his surroundings and life—in a small back street in the East End of London—did not tend to improve his civil or moral character, but he had a mother who worked hard for him and would willingly have laid down her life in his cause. Poor old soul, hers had been a life of care and trouble, with a bad husband who spent his life in low public-houses, and was never capable of a generous action till he killed himself with drink and left his widow with one less to keep.

The blood of the father seemed to flow in the veins of the son, and the grief-stricken woman saw, as years went on, the gradual development of the "virum," until one day she knew the worst—"her son was a thief," and the prison doors closed upon him.

This was the brimming of her cup of sorrow, and within a week the grave received the mortal remains of what had been "Jack's mother."

At the end of his term Davis returned to his old haunts with stolid indifference written on his features. Even the death of his mother did not seem to touch his hardened heart. But fate, now aroused to a sensibility of its obligations, cut him short in his evil career, and, directing him into the company of a recruiting sergeant, he was induced, while under the influence of drink, to accept the shilling and a soldier's uniform.

Jack Davis's regiment had not been stationed in India many months before the Mutiny broke out.

This was a time when Englishmen were called upon to defend themselves against a more than ordinary foe—not men, but demons. This they did, with honour to themselves and to their country.

But the privation and misery was fearful. A terrible drought had set in, and, hemmed in on all sides, the British soldiers suffered that awful scourge—never properly realised in England—thirst.

Relief seemed to be far away, and the situation became so serious that short rations of water were allotted the men.

Still things went from bad to worse, and a guard had to be placed at the watering-places to prevent supply running out.

The consequence was hard fights—between men parched with thirst—the stronger robbing the weaker. One sultry night the surgeon-major, going through the place, found Jack Davis on duty at one of the water wells, and, recognising him as one of the "worst characters" in the regiment, took the trouble to examine the vicinity, with the result that a flask, half filled with water, was found under some rubbish.

The stealing of water was an unpardonable offence at those times, and the young soldier received full punishment for his crime before the eyes of his comrades.

But his Captain, a humane man, was ready to take over the care of the poor, suffering fellow, and visited him in the prison cell, forcing upon him the responsibility of each true soldier,

and the fact that, in stealing water, he was robbing helpless women and children.

The kind way in which the words were put seemed to touch the man—unused to such treatment—and, before the officer left, Jack had promised to try and amend his ways.

Then came weeks of continuous fighting, wherein the young men showed bravery equal to that of the older soldiers.

Exposed to the heat of a tropical sun, scores dropped dead at their posts—sunstroke, the destroyer of men's reasons, dealing havoc among the ranks.

To add to the misery the water wells became exhausted, and plague set in.

One night Davis learned that his Captain was the latest victim, and lay near to death's door. The doctors were in constant attendance, but could lend no assistance—and this for want of water.

At midnight a form crept from one of the tents, looked stealthily around, and then disappeared in the darkness.

Not a soul had seen Jack Davis go.

The morning broke, and with it the light revealed the Captain on his hospital couch tossing with fever. He had laid in the sweltering heat for three long days, and the doctors knew that it was only the matter of a short period for the brave man to live.

A door was suddenly thrown open, and Private Davis appeared carrying a large can of water.

The stricken man clutched at the vessel and drank eagerly of the contents, while the medicals stood looking on with eager interest. With a sigh of relief the Captain's head slipped back on to its pillow, an inquiring and imploring look in his eye.

Jack seemed to read the look, for he dropped down on his knees and almost sobbed out—"No, no, Captain, don't think that; I did not steal it, as God is my Judge!" The words seemed to assure the officer, for a faint smile came to his lips, and then he closed his eyes and sank into sleep. The young fellow remained kneeling, his face buried in the couch—but the surgeon stepped forward, and touching him lightly on the shoulder, asked him to leave the Captain to rest.

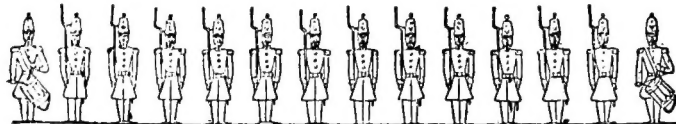
Jack raised himself at the bidding, but suddenly seemed to swoon, falling prostrate by the bedside.

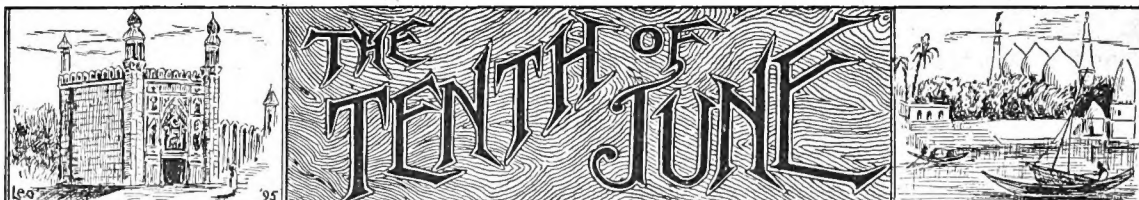
At the same time a large pool of blood stood revealed; while a dark crimson stain on his tunic showed where an Indian bullet had struck him, after he had gone through the English lines to the river for water. This, then, was the reason of his sudden disappearance from camp the night previous. With a feeling of reverence the doctors lifted the body of the young soldier on to a couch, and attempted to staunch the flow of blood.

But he was dying fast—beyond the help of earthly power.

Once he opened his eyes and gazed around him. The kneeling surgeon moistened his lips with a little water.

A look of thanks was flashed back, and then came the low words, "Don't tell—the Captain—I disobeyed—orders—I'm glad to die—for him." A pause, and then, "Mother—mother—I'm coming." The poor, tired eyes again closed, and the brave spirit winged its flight.





By JOHN K. LEYS, Author of "*In the Toils*," "*My Hindoo Friend*," &c., &c.—Illustrated by RAYMOND POTTER.

SUMMARY.

GEORFREY DUNDAS—A young barrister.
SIR ARTHUR CHETWYND—A retired general and a friend of Geoffrey.
LEILA CHETWYND—His daughter.
CAPTAIN BYNGHAM—An army officer, and cousin to Sir Arthur.
LORD LAVINGTON—A friend of the General.
AMAVATI, the Rajah of Nagore—A Hindoo prince who visits Sir Arthur, and develops an unrequited love for Leila.
CHUNDER SEN—The Rajah's secretary.
KUTTAPANI—The Rajah's cook.

During the Indian Mutiny Sir Arthur, together with Geoffrey's father (since dead), took part in the looting of a Hindoo temple on the tenth of June, and on this day every year afterwards one of the Englishmen concerned, or some member of their families, is assassinated. On the first of May, 1884, Amavati, the Rajah of Nagore, visits Sir Arthur, and Geoffrey tells him of the danger. Sir Arthur, on learning from his lawyer that his cousin, Captain Byngham, to whom he had intended to marry Leila, is almost penniless, though representing himself to be rich, wills him but a small annuity. Chunder Sen makes it possible for Byngham to surreptitiously examine the will, and promises to help him out of the difficulty. On the tenth of June Geoffrey goes to Wales, and is followed by Kuttapani, who attacks him in a lonely spot and leaves him for dead. Geoffrey, however, recovers, and tracks him to a house in Westbourne Park, named Lancaster Villa, which transpires to be the headquarters of the Hindoos.

CHAPTER XIV.

"GOOD-NIGHT—AND GOOD-BYE."

ON receiving this unexpected check, Geoffrey went back to his lodgings, and sat down to reconsider his plans.

It was clearly impracticable for him to trace the Hindoos; and even had such a thing been possible, he could not see what was to be gained by it. He could do no good, he said to himself, by hanging round these men for twelve months. He thought he would find out in the first place, from the house agent, whether they had definitely given up the house. If they had not, he would be pretty sure to find them there again in the following May.

The only thing he had to see to was to make arrangements for keeping the adjoining house, Chester Villa, from falling into the hands of strangers. He must rent that house, or at least secure the refusal of it.

Then the question arose:—Should he simply return to his usual life, or should he absent himself altogether, so as still to leave the Hindoos under the impression that their attempt on his life had succeeded? There still seemed a chance that he might be able to thwart his enemies' designs, on the General if they believed that they no longer had him to deal with. And another thing that helped to determine the young man to stick to his original plan was that he wanted to put the sea, for a time, between himself and Leila Chetwynd.

He had but a small private income; and his professional income was as yet in the clouds, and gave every sign of staying there. He could not, in honour, make love to Leila, and win her heart, knowing that he had no home of his own to bring her to, without her father's formal and willing consent. And he felt sure that if he were to be in Leila's company again—as he could hardly fail to be if he remained in England—he must betray his feelings to her. He would not be able to help it.

On the other hand, if the matter were already settled—if she were destined to become the bride of Captain Byngham, a man he had never liked, he would wish to be out of the way till it was all over. He could not stand by and see Leila plight her troth to another. The very thought tortured him.

No; he would leave England. He would go and see if he could shoot bears in the Rocky Mountains. But before he went, he would see Sir Arthur, tell him what had occurred since they parted, and at the same time find out, if possible,

whether there was any hope that the General would accept him as a son-in-law.

He awaited, therefore the General's return, spending the interval in making all arrangements necessary for his departure. Among other things, he paid a visit to the house-agent. He was told that the tenants of Lancaster Villa had *not* given up possession of the house; and he had no difficulty in getting the agent to say that he would communicate with Mr. Linton (who had promised to look after Geoffrey's affairs during his absence) before letting Chester Villa to anyone else.

After waiting a fortnight, to allow the General time to return home, Geoffrey wrote to him, begging him to let him know when he would be in town. To his surprise, the General's reply was dated from a quiet hotel in the West End, where he usually put up when he came to London; and his delight may be imagined when he read the postscript:—"L. insisted on coming up with me—to see the Row, she said. Can you dine with us on Thursday? Seven-thirty sharp."

The happiness of meeting Leila was enough to drive every other thought out of Geoffrey's head for the time. The dark shadow that had come over his life, even the hopelessness of his love, was forgotten.

Time went on crutches with him next day, but the longest day comes to an end; and by half-past seven Geoffrey was shaking hands with Leila in her father's private sitting-room at "Mather's."

"How well you are looking!" he cried involuntarily, as he gazed, with eyes that spoke his admiration all too plainly, at the bright, happy face before him. Leila was radiant that night. She never looked more lovely; her cheeks were glowing with health; her eyes sparkling with innocent enjoyment of her life.

"We are both very much the better for our sea trip," said the General. "In fact," he added, with a significant look at Geoffrey, "I think I needed a change more than Leila. Too much of the country is not good for a man who has spent an active life. The Atlantic breeze scattered the cobwebs that had begun to cluster round my old head. Nothing like a

breath of the sea air for dispelling morbid fancies."

This was said in rather a low tone, so that Leila might not hear it. She was busy removing the lid from a huge pasteboard box, which a waiter had just brought in. Geoffrey understood him to mean that he had ceased to believe in the reality of the dangers that menaced him. "I shall have to undeceive you presently, my good sir," said the young man to himself; but he thought it better to say nothing just then.



Paid a visit to the house-agent.

"What have you got there, Leila?" called out the General. The girl had raised the large lid, and was gazing at the contents of the box with a look of serious but intense satisfaction.

"It is my new ball-dress, papa," she answered with a little blush. "I couldn't resist taking just a peep at it. It is lovely!"

The General laughed at her earnestness.

"Send someone to take that box to Miss Chetwynd's room," he said to the head waiter, who just then entered the room. "Discipline must be maintained, my dear. This isn't the place for inspection of dresses. My daughter is plunging into the gaiety of the London season with all the ardour of youthful folly," he said to Geoffrey.

"Papa! What a shame to speak in that way. When you know that this is my first season, and I have been out for years and years!"

"If you *had* been 'out' so many years, you wouldn't care to call attention to the fact, my dear," said Sir Arthur. "But here is the soup, and I'm very glad to see it. Sit down, Geoffrey, my boy. I thought it would be cosier to dine here than downstairs. I hate eating among strangers, though Leila seems to prefer it."

"Papa, you are simply unbearable to-night," said the young lady with an air of offended dignity, as she took her seat at the head of the table.

"I needn't ask you whether you enjoyed your cruise," said Geoffrey.

"Oh, Mr. Dundas, it was simply delicious! I felt as if I could have sailed on for ever, past those lovely islands, and fairy headlands, and great cliffs where the sea birds swooped round and round, sailing in the air, as we sailed on the sea! The delightful freshness of the mornings—and the moonlit nights on deck! Oh, Mr. Dundas, if you have never been for a cruise you have simply no idea how delightful it is! Then all the people on board were so nice; and Lord Lavington was so kind and thoughtful for our comfort."

"Were there many people on board?"

"About a dozen. You would never think, to look at the yacht, that she could hold so many. But Lord Lavington is going to buy a larger one next year; and he is going to ask us—"

"Hey! What's that?" asked the General sharply.

The girl stopped short in some confusion.

"I heard nothing about an invitation for next year."

"It wasn't an invitation, papa. Only, one night when we were talking about the new yacht—she is to be a steamer, Mr. Dundas, quite a large vessel—he said he hoped we would be able to judge for ourselves what she was like, or something of that kind. It was only a polite speech."

"And what did you say, puss?"

"I said we meant to spend next season in London," said Leila saucily, with a little glance at Geoffrey.

"The dickens you did! And who told you that? You know I hate the racket, the long formal dinners, the crushes—ugh! I wouldn't stay a day in town but for you getting that promise out of me."

"Well, papa, when Lady Churchwood asked us to her dance we couldn't very well refuse, could we?"

"We could have refused perfectly well, but nothing would serve you but to 'accept. However, my dear, I am very pleased that you should have a little pleasure, and see a little of the world."

"Thank you, papa! Lady Churchwood is Lord Lavington's sister," Leila added for Geoffrey's benefit. "She was our chaperon on board the yacht."

"Isn't Lord Lavington married, then?" asked the young man, with an absurd, jealous pang at his heart.

"Oh, no."

"I fancied, somehow, he was an elderly man."

"Not at all."

"Quite young," broke in the General. "Just at the time when a man is at his best."

"I thought he was rather old; he has grey hair," said Leila simply.

"That's because you are so unsophisticated, my love.

Some men are grey at thirty; some are bald. Wait till you have gone through a season in London, my dear, and you will change your ideas on these subjects."

"Then we *are* going to spend next season in town?" cried Leila, her eyes beaming with the pleasure of anticipation.

"I can't say yet. Part of it, perhaps. I haven't made my plans—time enough to ask me eight months hence."

"Mr. Dundas," said Leila suddenly, "couldn't you manage to get a card for Lady Churchwood's dance on Monday evening?"

"My dear, how can he go if he is not asked?" asked the General almost tartly.

"But people do angle for invitations in London, papa. Flossie Chamberlayne told me so. And you know so many people, Mr. Dundas. I am sure you could get an invitation easily if you wished."

Geoffrey glanced at the General before replying.

"I don't think it is at all a dignified thing to angle for an invitation, as you call it," said Sir Arthur. "I may be old-fashioned, but I confess I should think it an impertinence for anyone to invite himself directly or indirectly to my house. And I should never dream of seeking an invitation to another man's house."

Geoffrey could hardly forbear smiling at the General's antiquated notions; but he was at the same time pained at his attitude.

He seemed to be saying, almost in so many words, "It would suit my plans better if you were not to appear at Lady Churchwood's on Monday night." But Geoffrey showed nothing of this in his face.

"I don't think people in society mind in the least if an intimate acquaintance



Gazing at the contents of the box.

asks for a card for a dance for a friend," he remarked quietly. "These dances are really semi-public affairs. But I hardly think I shall be able to go," he added, turning to Leila.

"Oh, very well. I'm sorry," said the girl. She was of opinion that her father had snubbed her, and that Geoffrey had not taken her part as he should have done. And Geoffrey was thinking that he would gladly give a hundred pounds for the pleasure of one waltz with Leila.

For the moment, he almost determined to break through the rule he had laid down for himself, and go to the ball. But the next moment, he saw that to do such a thing would be absolutely fatal to his schemes, for it was quite likely that if he were to go, next day his name would appear in the list of guests in the *Morning Post*.

"The fact is," he said, "I am thinking of going abroad, for some months—"

"Going abroad!" cried the General. "What has put that into your head?"

"I want to see life in the western States, and I want to shoot a bear or two, if there are any left."

"But your profession, my dear boy!"

"That's just it. At present I haven't any practice to speak of, so I can afford the time. Later on, I hope I may have so much to do that I may not be able to get away."

"Humph! When do you start?"

"Almost at once."



Sat and watched the traffic.

There was a momentary silence. Geoffrey could not help fancying that there was a shadow on Leila's face, a sad expression in her frank blue eyes, as she glanced at him.

"Have you heard from the Rajah since you returned?" asked Geoffrey, by way of changing the subject.

"Oh, yes," answered the General. "A most polite letter, full of courteous, old-fashioned phrases, thanking us for our hospitality, and so on. The Rajah's manners are decidedly superior to those of many modern Englishmen."

"Yes, indeed," cried

Leila. "I like the Rajah. I think he is delightful. And I am so glad he is coming back to us next June. I quite fancy it will be a match between him and—somebody."

"Leila, my dear, you ought not to say such things," said her father. "The Rajah is by birth a prince; and yet—well I consider that a marriage of the kind you allude to would be most undesirable, in fact almost unnatural."

Leila said nothing; but there was a mischievous look in her eyes, which Geoffrey understood.

The conversation now drifted in the direction of the plays and pictures of the year, and it did not return to more personal topics while dinner lasted.

When the dessert was on the table the General and Geoffrey went out on the balcony to smoke, while Leila sat down to the piano, and began playing snatches from various composers as the fancy seized her. The two men sat and watched the traffic as it flowed ceaselessly on past the corner of the quiet side-street in which they were sitting.

"What is the real reason of your going to America?" asked the General abruptly.

"I will tell you when Miss Chetwynd leaves us for the night," answered Geoffrey.

That moment soon came. Coffee was brought in; and when, shortly afterwards, the General said:

"Now, my love, early to bed and early to rise, you know," Leila obediently rose.

Her father was busy shutting the French window, as she offered her hand to Geoffrey. He held her fingers a moment in his own.

"I will bid you good-bye now," he said; "it is hardly likely that I shall see you again before I sail."

"Confound it! I've left my cigar-case outside," said the General, opening the window as he spoke. He was only absent for a few seconds; but these were just the few seconds Geoffrey had been hoping for all the evening.

"I don't see why you need go away at all," said Leila, in a voice that was hardly quite steady.

"I am running away," said Geoffrey, and his voice was low and husky—"from myself. I cannot stay in England any longer at present."

"Why not?" was on the girl's lips; but just then the young man raised his eyes, and she read something in them which not only checked the question, but made a soft blush steal over cheek and brow.

She turned hastily away, and busied herself with the loose

music on the piano; and, by the time her father had come back, closed the window, and turned round to bid her good-night, the blush had died quite away. Indeed, her face was pale as she offered her hand to Geoffrey for the last time.

"Good-night—and good-bye," he said softly. And she answered, "A pleasant trip, then, and a safe return;" and, as she spoke, she smiled.

Many a time afterwards, as he lay on his bed of fine twigs and snow, gazing on the stars that peered through the branches overhead, or watching the sparks as they whirled up from the red camp fire, Geoffrey remembered that smiling look.

CHAPTER XV.

"YOU LOVE MY DAUGHTER!"

"AND now, my dear fellow, what is the reason of this sudden freak of yours?" asked Sir Arthur, when Geoffrey had closed the door behind Leila.

For answer the young man told the General what had happened to him since he left Seacombe Towers. As he spoke, the ruddy, well-satisfied look which Sir Arthur had worn, the look of a man well content with himself and the world, left his face. His cheeks lost their colour; a hard, stern, *set* look came into his eyes. He continued gazing at the speaker in silence, till the last word had been uttered. Then he drew a long breath, and, throwing himself back in his chair, began gnawing the ends of his moustache.

"You had a squeak for it, Geof," he said. Being an Englishman, that was all.

Geoffrey nodded. "At one time I really thought I was done for," he said; "but one good thing is that you have now a capital excuse for refusing to receive the Rajah next June."

The General slowly shook his head.

"It would hardly be fair to hold the Rajah responsible for the acts of his servant," he said.

This seemed to Geoffrey to be straining the obligation of hospitality. However, he contented himself with saying that the existence of a conspiracy was now beyond question; and to this the General gravely assented.

"But there is another reason why I should wish to leave the country for a time," continued Geoffrey.

"Yes?"

The General was hardly listening. His thoughts were busy with the Hindoos and their conspiracy. Geoffrey was piqued into saying:

"I hope you will pardon my abruptness, but may I ask if Miss Chetwynd is engaged to marry her cousin?"

The young man had calculated that the question would "wake up" the old campaigner, and he was right.

"What, sir?" he cried in a voice of thunder, starting from his chair.

Geoffrey felt that he had gone too far; but nothing was to be gained by retreat.

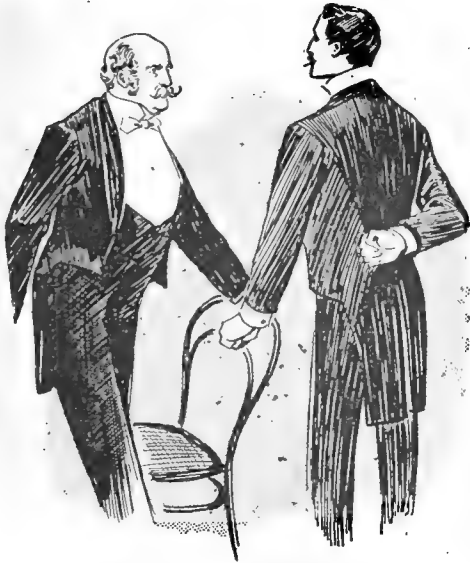
"The question would be an impertinence, sir," he said, "if it were not that my own welfare and happiness are so closely bound up with your answer."

"What is that you say? Do you mean that you have the audacity to tell me that your happiness is bound up with my daughter's?"

Geoffrey also started to his feet. It was his turn to be angry.



"Good-night—and good-bye."



"Audacity is a hard word."

Sir Arthur, I am leaving the country rather than stay to witness your daughter's marriage."

"My daughter is not going to be married."

"I thought it was settled that she was to marry Captain Byngham," said Geoffrey, his heart beating fast with hope.

"Well, she is not. Captain Byngham is—not the sort of man I would choose for a son-in-law. But I don't see that it is any concern of yours."

"Nor would it be, except that—that I love her."

"You! You love my daughter! How can you speak in that way?—You know that your income——. I need not say more. It is quite out of the question."

Geoffrey was silent.

"It is quite out of the question," repeated the General.

"I cannot answer you," said the young man. "And yet it seems hard for us poor 'detrimentials,' as we are called. You invite us to your houses out of pure kindness, and we are allowed to sit by your daughters, talk with them, dance, ride, sing with them. Outwardly, we and they are on a footing of perfect equality. Yet the moment one of us dares to show himself a man, and not a mere talking, dancing, shooting machine, you cry out as if he had done something unnaturally wicked."

The General's stern face relaxed. He even smiled.

"You are an impertinent young puppy, sir," he said. "But you are your father all over, so I forgive you. Sit down, now, and let us talk over things in a rational way."

Geoffrey stared at the old man in surprise. He did not understand the General sufficiently to know that he was often the first to blame himself for his hot-headedness, and the first to regret it. He had already been quite subdued by the young man's spirited self-defence.

He sat down, with Geoffrey opposite him, lit his cigar, and for a few minutes smoked in silence.

"I suppose you are in earnest about this affair," he said, at length.

"In earnest? As much in earnest—more in earnest than I ever was in my life!"

"Have you said anything to my daughter about this—given her to understand the nature of your feelings?"

"No. Except—to-night. In bidding her good-bye I allowed her to know that I was going to America in order to put the sea between us."

"Humph! You couldn't have done that. However, there must be no writing, you understand."

"Certainly not, Sir Arthur," said Geoffrey stiffly.

"Personally," went on the General, after a long pause, "I have no wish that my little girl should marry at all. I dread

"Audacity is a hard word, sir, in that connection, for you to use to my father's son," he said proudly.

The General frowned, but remained silent.

"Yet you mistake me," went on Geoffrey. "I did not presume to bracket my name with your daughter's. I was excusing myself for putting what seemed an impertinent question by saying that my happiness depended on your answer. The fact is,

the parting with her. But I am not so selfish as to stand in the way of her happiness."

Another long pause. Geoffrey's heart began to beat faster. He could not help hoping that the General was going to give way. The General's next words undeceived him.

"But if she marries it must be suitably. There is nothing to prevent her occupying a very exalted station. I may tell you, for I wish you to see that I treat you with confidence, that Lord Lavington is a suitor for her hand. He came to me, and asked my permission, as a gentleman should. And I told him that I wished him success, but that in my opinion it would be better for his interests that I should not interfere at all.

"So the matter stands. He has been a good deal with us since we have been in town, and I have no doubt he will propose to her shortly. Now, my dear fellow, I have no objection to you personally—none. But really, you know, with your slender income, and your uncertain prospects——"

"Say no more, sir, if you please," said Geoffrey; and even in his own ears his voice sounded hoarse and strange. "I was mad. I see it now. It is best for me to go to America. I will carry out my original plan. I shall be away for nearly a year, and perhaps by that time it will be all over. Good-bye."

He rose, and held out his hand.

"Good-bye, my dear fellow"—(Geoffrey wished he would keep his affectionate phrases to himself). "Think of me as kindly as you can. This time next year things will look very differently to you, and you will see that I was right. But just at present, I agree with you, you will be the better for a complete change of scene."

And so they parted.

Geoffrey was thankful to be alone, to be out in the cool, quiet summer night, under the stars. For hours he wandered on, through street and square and park, till the dawn broke, and the sparrows chirped loud, and the gas-lamps burned yellow and dim.

Not till that night, it seemed to him, had he realised how passionately he loved Leila Chetwynd. To leave the country and allow her to become the wife of another man was like tearing the flesh from his bones. But he saw there was no help for it. To depend on the general's purse after what he had said would be worse than meanness—it would be the action of a cur. And to marry Leila without his consent, even if such a thing were possible, would be to condemn her to a life of squalid hardships.

There was no help for it. But Geoffrey never forgot the bitterness of that hour. He must be more or less than a man—probably less—who can resign himself to the loss of one who is dearer to him than life itself, without many a wild and bitter thought, many a cruel pang. Geoffrey Dundas was young and strong, and able to suffer; but for many and many a day he carried on his heart the scars of that night's agony.

Three days later he was at sea.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

TEN months went by; and among the passengers who embarked on the *City of Madrid* on the 20th of April at New York for Queenstown and Liverpool was Geoffrey Dundas.

He was changed considerably from what he had been when he left England the previous summer—changed in appearance, and changed also in some of his mental qualities. He looked four or five years older. His figure



Geoffrey was thankful to be alone.

was more upright, his movements more free and vigorous. His face was bronzed with exposure; it had lost the delicacy, the look of smart, precocious puerility, which is characteristic of the Londoner. His muscles were now as hard as the fibres of an oak. His eye was calm and strong, as the eye of a man must be who for some time has habitually faced danger.

Distance and time had done something to heal the smart of his wound—something, but not much. It was only by constant movement, constant excitement, that he could forget the pain that gnawed continually at his heart.

Sport had done much for him—not the "sport" of betting on a horse-race, or firing at a partridge or a rabbit, but the grim sport of risking his life in ridding the earth of beasts of prey. He had learned to face danger, not merely with the courage of a naturally brave man, but with the cool confidence of one who has more than once looked death in the face without flinching.

Through all his wanderings, the *Times* had followed him; for he had ordered that it should be sent to him regularly, that he might learn whether Leila Chetwynd had become Lady Lavington. Many a time had he tramped scores of miles to reach the little outlandish post-office, where he knew the bundle of newspapers would be waiting for him; and then felt such a horrible dread of reading the death-sentence of his love that he could barely find the courage to tear off the wrappers. But, so far, he had seen no announcement of the wedding.

He could hardly understand it. Leila, he knew, was heart-whole; she had openly said that she liked Lord Lavington, and had accepted without hesitation the attentions his sister had offered her, no doubt at his instigation. There was no reason why she should not be pleased and flattered by the viscount's preference; no reason why she should not return his love. Yet no announcement of the marriage had appeared; and Geoffrey was forced to clench his teeth to keep down the storm of emotion that threatened to overwhelm him if he had allowed himself to think what that might mean.

On arriving in London Geoffrey sent a telegram to Sir Arthur Chetwynd to advise him of his return, and received an answer by post. Both the General and Leila were at home at Seacombe Towers, and he understood from this that Leila was not married.

There was no invitation for Geoffrey; and from this he understood that the General was unwilling that he and Leila should meet. Unconsciously he had hoped for an invitation, and the disappointment was keen and bitter. If the young man had ever imagined that he was in any degree cured of his love for Leila that moment would have undeceived him.

But there was something, he told himself, that he could yet do for her. Her own life might not be threatened, but her father certainly was in danger; and for her, a motherless

girl, to lose her father, would be a frightful calamity. And Geoffrey was convinced that by keeping up a watch on the Hindoos he might be able to defeat their plans, and save their intended victim. He resolved to take up the work where he had laid it down; and the first point, obviously, was to ascertain whether the Hindoos had returned to Lancaster Villa.

It was growing dusk when he paid his first visit to the house. Once more London had decked herself, as it were, in her spring raiment, and adorned herself with garlands. The air was cool and fresh, for it was still the first week in May; and Geoffrey was passing carelessly along one of the half-empty streets, not far from Lancaster Villa, when he saw a figure in front of him that he thought he recognised, the figure of Amavati.

At first Geoffrey literally could not believe his eyes. Knowing the Rajah's ideas, and the customs of his life, it was incredible that he should be found in this out-of-the-way corner of London at that hour, on foot and unattended.

Geoffrey drew nearer him. There could be no doubt it was he.

The young Englishman was about to step up to him and accost him, when he suddenly drew back.

What could this mean? he asked himself. Was Amavati after all in league with these murderers? If not, what was he doing here, without an attendant, contrary to the etiquette he adhered to so rigidly?

All the dark suspicions which Geoffrey had at one time entertained of the Rajah, and which he had afterwards dismissed as unworthy and unfounded, recurred to his mind.

Here was proof, something whispered to him—proof clear and unmistakable—of his alliance with the men who had twice attempted his life!

"I will not condemn him till I am certain," said Geoffrey to himself. "He may be going to some other house in the neighbourhood. I will wait and see."

Keeping a good way behind, Geoffrey followed the Rajah. Amavati made straight for Lancaster Villa. When the house came in sight, Geoffrey decreased the distance between Amavati and himself, so that, in the declining light, he might make no mistake as to the house he entered.

At the gate, leading to Lancaster Villa, the Rajah stopped short, carefully read the name of the house on the gate-post; and then put his hand on the latch.

In doing so, he turned half round, and, with a start, drew back his hand. He had seen Geoffrey Dundas.

In an instant Geoffrey had formed his plan.

He walked slowly up to the Rajah, and looked him in the face.

(To be continued)



Look death in the face.



FORGIVEN

Miss Dalton paced the library with a restless step, glancing at the clock every now and then with anxious eyes. She was gowned, garlanded and gloved for a ball, but her escort had not arrived, and growing impatience was fast sending little ripples of frowns over her pretty face and mobile features. No man had dared to keep her waiting before, and the tender appealing eyes were losing their softness in the dusky gloom of indignation that was gathering in their depths.

There was a ring at the bell, and she prepared a volley of reproach to fire at her *fiancé* when he entered, but the well-known step did not echo upon the polished floor, and she knew he had not come. She pulled off her gloves impatiently, and threw them upon the table. She will not go now, even should he come. It is nearly half-past ten, and her toilet looks disarranged already, for she has a trick of running her fingers through her hair when she is restless, and the flowers on her bosom have begun to droop in the heat of the room.

"He should have sent me a note," she exclaimed between her teeth, as she flung herself into a chair.

A violent peal at the bell makes her start and prepare again to give her lover a warm reception, but, after the door closes, she sees Walters going towards the study with a telegram for her father, and her heart sinks into a sickening heaviness with the growing pain. The fire is getting lower, the carriages in the street roll by farther apart, and the great hall clock, tolling out the hour, seems to ring a funeral knell in her heart.

"Turn out all the lights, Walters, and admit no one to-night," she says, as she goes up the broad staircase, with her long white robes trailing behind her and the crimson wreath of flowers in her hair dimmed by the flush of anger on her face. There has been a fierce combat within her breast, a battle between love and pride, and the latter has conquered. She loves this man, but she loves power also, and she wishes to make him feel the weight of her power.

Before she retired she gathered together all the letters he had written to her, all the mementoes of the engagement, and bound them in a package with the ring, whose pure light had scintillated on her finger for months. These are to be given to him on the morrow—he will surely come then—and she prepares to put her heart in armour against the man to whom she had given her life and into whose care she had intrusted all her future happiness.

The next day he does not come, and her wrath deepens as the hours creep by. At mid-day the rankling bitterness is somewhat allayed by the burning of two of Graham's photos, and tearing from a doorway a mass of Eastern embroidery which he had sent her from Damascus.

She knows no accident has befallen him, else she would have learned of it at once, and that evening, at dinner, when her mother timidly inquires if Graham is ill, Tom replies that he had seen him just two hours before, driving rapidly in a cab. Miss Dalton turns the drift of the conversation to Melba's marvellous voice, and proposes the opera next evening.

"The Wilson girl is the cause," she concludes. "She has made every effort to ensnare him, and now her designs are accomplished." Her resolutions not to see him when he calls are swept away by a desire to exhibit her scorn, to show her contempt for his treachery.

"Mr. Graham," announces Walters very soon after the others have departed for the theatre, and Miss Dalton is left alone in the library.

"Ask him in here," she said quietly, as she glanced round to ascertain if her package was within reach. He held out

both hands in greeting as he advanced, the joy and gladness in his face showing that no idea of dismissal had entered his mind.

"Estelle," he began at once; "did you think I would never come? I have been —"

The words die unuttered as he notes scorn in the curl of her lips, the flash of anger in her eyes, and the uplifted hand that warns him not to continue.

"What is the matter? You surely are not angry! You know that only a matter of the utmost importance could have kept me away from —"

"Here are your letters, Mr. Graham, together with the ring and other tokens of our engagement, which you will now consider at an end. I wish no explanations—I will not listen to them."

"Good heavens! You will not dismiss me this way—without a cause? You will, at least, allow me to vindicate myself in your eyes! I cannot go like this—have you think me a traitor to my vows! Last night —"

"I cannot hear your story—leave me! Here is the ring—your letters. You have had no consideration for me, why should I for you? Only two events could exonerate your behaviour. You were not ill?"

"No."

"You met with no accident?"

"No; but there is something far worse—"

"I will accept no apology. No man shall think he can slight me, and then, at his pleasure, return and be reinstated by a few words of atonement. Our engagement is broken; it can never be renewed."

"Very well, Miss Dalton. I accept your verdict"; and taking the package from her hand, he continued, "Do not fear that I will annoy you—one dismissal is sufficient; but, before I leave you, I wish to tell you something—a story told me by a dying man; it will interest you, as it concerns someone you know—a woman." She did not ask him to be seated—did not seat herself, but stared at him in a pathetic, stony way, as though she would never look on his face again.

"I will never forgive you; so if it is for your sake that you tell the story, you may spare yourself."

"It is not for my sake," he answered coldly. "I do not ask your pardon—do not expect it."

She said nothing, but leaned lightly against the mantelpiece, while he continued slowly, as though each word was of vital importance, and he wished to use as few as possible: "Last evening at six, while bidding Carroll good-bye at the station, I noticed a poor drunken wretch, whose ravings were gathering a crowd round him, and I knew that he would soon be in a policeman's clutches unless some one cared for him. He had just come off a city train, and asked the way to Vernon Street, which I know well. In his hand he held a package of letters, which he waved through the air in a threatening manner, and assured the bystanders that they would bring him a fortune.

"I foresaw an excellent newspaper paragraph for some reporter, and determined to nip it in the bud. The man said he had letters for which the writer would pay, and as I think the dissection in the newspapers of everybody's business should be discouraged, I rescued him in time and offered to conduct him to his destination."

Graham paused, passed his hand across his brow, while Miss Dalton frowned angrily, and exclaimed, "Really, Mr. Graham, perhaps you have forgotten that I do not belong to the

Temperance Union, neither am I interested in any society for the reformation of inebriates." She had always admired his philanthropy, but upon this occasion she failed to comprehend his interest in a man debased by liquor when he should be overwhelmed with losing her.

"A few words dropped from this man's lips prompted me to take him to my rooms," he continued, ignoring her interruption. "I learnt there that he had made his escape from a retreat into which he had been put for treatment; that he held a woman's reputation in his hands; that his hatred for her treatment in former years made him long to injure her in some way. He had been out of the asylum long enough to revert to old habits, and was reckless."

Graham looked straight at Miss Dalton, and saw that she was becoming more interested. He took a long breath, and continued in louder, clearer tones:

"It seems that he met her while she was at a boarding-school. She eluded the mistress's watchfulness, and met him often, wrote him constantly, became engaged, and gave him her photograph. When she bade farewell to school books and college days, he learned that she had simply amused herself at his expense, that she had entered into this flirtation to beguile the tedium and monotony of school life."

"He reproached her with the fact that he had given up everything for her sake; that he had allowed splendid business opportunities to slip by that he might remain in the town that sheltered her. He told her, with all the fervour and earnestness of a broken-hearted man how she had come into his life to stay, and that to give her up would make a wreck, morally and physically, of him."

"She only laughed in his face, assured him that he would soon forget, demanded all her letters and the velvet case containing a face that had been his guiding star. He insisted upon keeping them as a reminder of his happiness, never intending to use them in any way; but drink had maddened him until he felt that he had been wronged and she should be made to suffer for the destruction she had wrought."

"His family had placed him in a retreat for inebriates, and for over a year he had watched his chance to escape, and when it came he journeyed to this, the city where she lives, and it was his desire to face her and let her see what she had made of his life, and to proclaim this schoolgirl episode to the world in which she moved."

Miss Dalton's face had grown so white that even the dancing fire-flames did not light it up, and she sank into a chair, where she watched with bated breath Graham's lips as he ended the story.

"Where did this man live?" she asked in a trembling voice.

"In Chelford. There is a convent there."

She screened her face from the fire-light as she asked again, in a scarcely audible tone, "Did he tell you the name of the woman—he loved?"

"Yes; and I have brought her the letters, together with her photograph." He laid a package in her lap, and added, with a sigh at the recollection of the journey, "I have taken the man back to the place whence he came—that is where I was last night—and put him in the care of keepers who will see that he does not leave them again. He is dying of some cerebral congestion, and can live but a few months. You have your letters, Miss Dalton, and I beg that you will not allow this affair to give you one moment's unhappiness, as your secret is safe with me. I wish you good evening."

"Geoffrey!" she cried, putting out her arms as she saw him striding towards the door. "Come back, my love, come back. Forgive me for not telling you all this before; forgive me for treating you as I did this evening. I never understood your noble heart, your generous nature before." And as Geoffrey Graham laid the dark head against his big, strong shoulder, looked down into the tear-bathed eyes and felt two soft, white arms about his neck, he did not wonder that a man's life was wrecked after loving and losing this woman.

FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

THEY were talking about mesmerism in the green-room of the Arundel Theatre. Cordyl, the manager, was there, and did not believe in it at all.

"Mesmerism! it is simply another word for trickery," he said, confidently.

"Pardon me, but have you ever witnessed any mesmeric phenomena?" asked a man with dark, penetrating eyes. He was a journalist, a friend of one or two of the actors at the Arundel, and haunted the green-room. Cordyl had seen him there before, and did not take to him—perhaps because Tom Hallam, the journalist, had bothered him to accept a play of his. However, a manager cannot afford altogether to offend the press, so Hallam was not interfered with.

Cordyl answered him now rather curtly, however.

"Thousands of times," he said. "What they call phenomena: men eating candles and all that sort of nonsense; but it is all pure trickery."

"Mind, Mr. Hallam is a mesmerist himself," put in the leading lady.

The manager shrugged his shoulders.

"Would you like to see an exhibition of what I can do?" asked the journalist quietly.

Cordyl shrugged his shoulders again.

"Would you care to wager that I can't stop your play to-night by mesmerising the company?" went on Hallam, as quietly as before; and they all laughed, Cordyl with the rest.

"I am quite serious," said the mesmerist, "and if Mr. Cordyl does not object to my making the experiment—as he hardly can do after his assertions—I shall be happy to show him how easy it is to rule the wills of the subjects whom I have been allowed to bring a little under my mesmeric control."

"What should you do to us?" asked the leading lady.

"Simply make a few passes before you went on. I should not, of course, send you into the mesmeric sleep, or you could not go on at all, unless I willed you to, and directed your actions."

She turned to Cordyl.

"Oh! do let him try. There's a dear."

The manager frowned.

"I cannot have my plays humbugged about even for your sake."

"But, according to you, I cannot do anything," said Hallam. "If there is nothing in mesmerism, I cannot affect your play in any way that I can discern. Will you agree to a wager upon it?"

"Come, Mr. Cordyl," said everybody, "you cannot refuse to back your assertions."

"It is too absurd," said the manager.

"But there is no harm in having a little money on it," said Leon Kay, the comedian. "Suppose the experiment is made on the monologue. Mr. Hallam is welcome to make as many mesmeric passes on me as he pleases, but I don't think he will be able to prevent me going through with my piece."

Leon Kay was acting a monologue, called "The Old Letter," as the first piece every night before the drama. "The Old Letter" had been written to order by a well-known dramatist. Cordyl never under any circumstances risked a play not written by a well-known man, and it was not much of a success. Leon Kay made as much out of it, of course, as anybody possibly could; but it did not go very well for all that.

Perhaps this is why the manager allowed himself to be cajoled and bullied at last into wagering £10 that Hallam could not, while sitting in a box on the following night, prevent Leon Kay from performing the piece, or make him act in any unusual manner during the performance of it.

The wager was put into writing, and both Cordyl and Hallam deposited their £10 with one of the company.

Cordyl called upon Leon Kay to give his promise that he would not play any tricks, but Kay shook his head.

"No, Mr. Cordyl; I know perfectly well that if I did, I should quit your company on Saturday night. And I cannot afford to do that, even if Hallam offered me all his £10 as an inducement."

Cordyl laughed.

"How well you know me," he said.

Next night every member of the company who had not to be dressing for the drama, was in front of the house, anxious to watch Tom Hallam's experiment. The journalist had made a few impressive passes over Leon Kay after he was dressed, and then went with the manager into a private box a few minutes before the curtain went up.

"Does Kay play nothing but light comedy?" he asked carelessly when they were seated.

Cordyl laughed his rather unpleasant laugh.

"He does not get the chance. They all think they are taking the wrong parts. Kay thinks he has the making of a serious actor—comic men invariably have; but it is lucky for the public that we managers keep them to the parts that they can really do."

"I think I'll make Kay play a serious part to-night," said the journalist thoughtfully; and, as he spoke, the curtain went up.

Everybody who had heard of the experiment to be made glanced up at Hallam, who, as the curtain rose, fixed his dark, penetrating eyes, with a concentrated look of command, on the face of the actor.

Half way across the stage, Kay seemed suddenly to feel the effect of his commanding glance. He had come in, as usual, with the little skip of a comic old man, but now he suddenly stopped dead. The members of the company in front ceased to look at Hallam, and fixed their eyes, full of attention, on Leon Kay. His pause was only for a moment—the ordinary spectators could hardly notice it—then he walked to the seat that he had to take by a small table, but he staggered as he walked with uncertain steps, and, when he reached his place, sank down with his arms on the table and his face on his arm.

"Why, the man is intoxicated!" said Cordyl.

And when Kay spoke, his voice sounded as though the manager was right. Worst of all, he was not speaking his lines, but something quite different. The audience, however, noticed nothing wrong, for the words were coherent and intelligible, although they certainly were not the words of "The Old Letter." The apparent intoxication seemed part of the play. The words were even interesting, and there was a listening hush over the place, which was not usually noticed when "The Old Letter" was played.

"It is a trick," said Cordyl; but Hallam, with his dark eyes fixed on the actor's face, did not seem to hear. His cheeks were unnaturally pale, and drops of cold perspiration stood on his forehead.

"Leon Kay shall suffer for this," growled the manager again; and Hallam, with his white concentrated face, turned to him with sudden excitement.

"Be silent, man, unless you want a *fiasco*. Leave me alone, and I can pull you through. Distract my attention, and see what happens."

The manager glanced at the stage again, in obedience to the journalist's directing finger.

The actor was sitting quite motionless with a vacant look on his face. Cordyl was conscious now that he had stopped speaking in the middle of a speech at the instant that the mesmerist had turned his eyes from the stage.

"For pity's sake go on," he said, conquered; and as Hallam turned back, the play went on again, the astonished manager not speaking another word during the whole performance.

The piece that Kay was giving, a piece Cordyl had never heard before, seemed to him to take hours in delivering. In reality, the monologue was quite a short one, and occupied less than half-an-hour; but the anxious manager, expecting every moment that something might disturb the mesmerist's attention, and cause the piece to break down ingloriously, the minutes passed like hours.

Even in his agony of suspense, the manager could not help noticing Leon Kay's acting. It was the wonderful part of the whole affair. He was completely transformed, and played with a depth and passion that astonished those who knew his ordinary acting in comic character, clever as that was. He had always been able to make the audience laugh. To-night, in the strange little monologue, he was making half the audience cry. When all too soon for everybody but Cordyl, the curtain came down, there was a perfect hurricane of applause, and the actor was called again and again.

Next day there was an enthusiastic notice in one of the chief morning papers, whose critic had been lured there, in time for the monologue, by a note from the leading lady. He could not say enough of the play or the acting. "Without any notice on the programme, and without even changing the scenery of 'The Old Letter,'" he wrote, "there was produced last night, at the Arundel Theatre, a short play as remarkable for its quite abnormal cleverness and beauty, as for the modesty of its anonymous author, who allowed it to appear without even a title." The criticism went on enthusiastically to describe the beauties of the monologue, and then gave a quarter of a column to Leon Kay's acting.

In the afternoon Hallam received a visit at his rooms from Cordyl and the actor who held the stakes. The latter handed over the money, and Cordyl asked if it was possible to get a copy of the monologue which Kay had delivered under the journalist's influence.

"It was a splendid thing," said the manager. "Where on earth did you get it from? I suppose you must have known it yourself word for word?"

"Yes," said Hallam quietly. "It was a little thing I offered you six months ago, which you said would not do at all."

"Well, I hope you will offer me it again," said Cordyl. "The public will expect it now. I only hope Kay will act as well when he is not under your influence."

"Oh, I expect he will," said the mesmerist with a smile; but it was not till a twelvemonth after, when his plays were being asked for everywhere, and Kay had married the leading lady and joined the Lyceum company, that Hallam handed him back his £10, and explained how anxious he and his "chum," Leon Kay, had been to get a hearing, the one for his plays, the other for his serious acting.

"But that pause, when you took your eyes away," stammered Cordyl.

"Oh! the pause was in the play," laughed Hallam.

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THE DRUMMER BOY

HE was a little drummer boy who had been attached to a regiment of skirmishers. His name was Kadour, and he was one of the handful of Turks that had followed Vinoy's army into Paris. He had been in every action of the campaign from Wissembourg to Champigny. He used to flit across the battlefields like a bird of passage, with his iron clappers and *derbouka* (Arabian drum), so lively and restless that he seemed to actually dodge the bullets.

But as winter came on this little Turk, bronzed and reddened by the fire of grape shot, was unable to endure the long night watches. The immobility of the snow proved too much for him, and one morning he was picked up on the banks of the Marne with swollen and frozen feet. He was a long time in the hospital, and it was there that I first saw him.

Sad and patient as a sick dog, the Turk looked about him with a languid eye. Whenever anyone spoke to him he smiled and showed his teeth. That was all he could do, for our language was unknown to him, and he scarcely spoke the *sabir*, that Algerian *patois* composed of Provençal, Italian and Arabian words picked up here and there like shells along the shores of the Latin seas.

Kadour's only amusement was his *derbouka*. From time to time when his memory became very restless it was brought to his bed, and he would be allowed to play upon it, but very softly, on account of the other invalids. Sometimes he would beat the charge, and the gleam of his white teeth changed to a ferocious laugh, or his eyes softened at some Mussulman serenade, his nostrils quivered, and through the nauseous atmosphere of the hospital, amid the phials and bandages, he pictured to himself the orange-laden groves of Blidah and the little Moresks coming from the bath, veiled in white and perfumed with vervaine.

Thus two months passed away. A great many things had happened in Paris during those two months of which Kadour knew absolutely nothing. He had heard beneath his window the tramping of the exhausted and unarmed troops marching into the city, and after that the rolling of cannons from morning till night, and then the tocsin and the cannonade. All of these led him to believe that the war was still going on, and that he would fight again as soon as he might be able.

At last he set out, with his drum on his back, in quest of his company. He did not search long, for some passing troops took him to the Place. After a long interrogatory, from which they were able to learn nothing more than *bono bezeff, macache bono*, the general of the day settled the matter by giving him ten francs and a horse, and attached him to his staff.

There was a little of everything in those staffs of the Commune, red coachmen's frocks, Polish mantles, Hungarian coats, sailors' pea jackets, gold, velvet and spangles. With his yellow embroidered blue vest, his turban and *derbouka* the Turk was one of the brightest figures of that wild masquerade.

Happy at finding himself in such good company, intoxicated by the sunlight, the cannonade and the confusion of arms and uniforms, persuaded moreover that the war against Prussia was still being carried on, only with more *abandon*, this innocent little deserter mingled naively in the great Parisian bacchanal and became the celebrity of the day.

Wherever he went he was applauded from the windows. The Commune was so proud at possessing him that it paraded and sported him like a cockade. He would be sent twenty times a day from the Place to the Minister of War, and thence to the Hotel de Ville. For it had been said so often that the marines of the Commune were sham marines and the artillery men sham also. But he was a real Turk; to be

convinced of that one had only to remark the monkey-like mobility of countenance and savage agility of body revealed in his fantastic flights about the city.

Kadour felt that something was wanting to complete his happiness. He longed to fight and smell powder. Unfortunately the staffs under the Commune, as under the Empire, were not exposed to fire. When not engaged on parade or in bearing despatches the little Turk passed his time in the Place Vendome, or in the courts of the War Ministry, or in disordered camps encumbered with half-empty brandy casks and broken barrels of pork, amid feasting in the open air wherein one still recalled the famine of the siege.

Too good a Mussulman to take part in these orgies, Kadour soberly and tranquilly held himself aloof, performing his ablutions in a corner and preparing his *kouss kouss* with a handful of semoula. Then, after a little air on the *derbouka*, he rolled himself up in his cloak and went to sleep on a doorstep amid the flames of the bivouac.

One morning in May Kadour was awakened by a terrible fusillade. The Ministry was in commotion; everyone was frightened.

Mechanically he followed the lead of the others, leaped into his saddle and joined the staff. The streets were crowded with disordered battalions and echoed with shrill trumpet peals. Pavements were torn up and thrown into barricades. Evidently something extraordinary was about to happen. Near the quay the firing was more distinct and the tumult greater.

On the Pont de la Concorde Kadour became separated from the staff. A little further on his horse was taken from him by a very important fellow wearing eight shoulder straps, under the pretence of bearing an important message to the Hotel de Ville.

Furiously the Turk began to run towards the battle, and as he ran he loaded his musket and muttered between his teeth: "*Ma cach bono Brissien*," for he still believed it to be the Prussians who were trying to enter. The bullets were already flying about the obelisque and in the foliage of the Tuileries. At the barricade of the Rue de Rivoli the avengers of Flourens called to him "He! He! Turk! Turk!" They were only a dozen, but Kadour alone was worth an army.

He stood erect on the barricade uttering shrill cries as he fought under a storm of grape shot. At one moment the dense cloud of smoke dispersed a little between two cannon shots, enabling him to see a mass of red pantaloons ranged in the Champs Elysées. Immediately everything became confused.

Suddenly the cannonade ceased. The last cannoner fled after firing a parting shot. The Turk alone remained. Half concealed, ready for the assault, he fixed his bayonet and awaited the attack.

Amid the dull sound of the charge an officer cried: "Surrender!"

The Turk was bewildered for a moment; he then threw up his musket, and replied:

"*Bono bono Francese*," for he vaguely imagined that this was Faidherbe's or Chanzy's army of deliverance which the Parisians had awaited so long. In the twinkling of an eye the barricade was invaded and he was surrounded.

"Show me your musket!"

The weapon was still hot and smoking.

"Show your hands!"

His hands were blackened with powder, and the innocent Turk exhibited them with his naive smile. Then they pushed him against a wall and—bang!

He died not knowing why.

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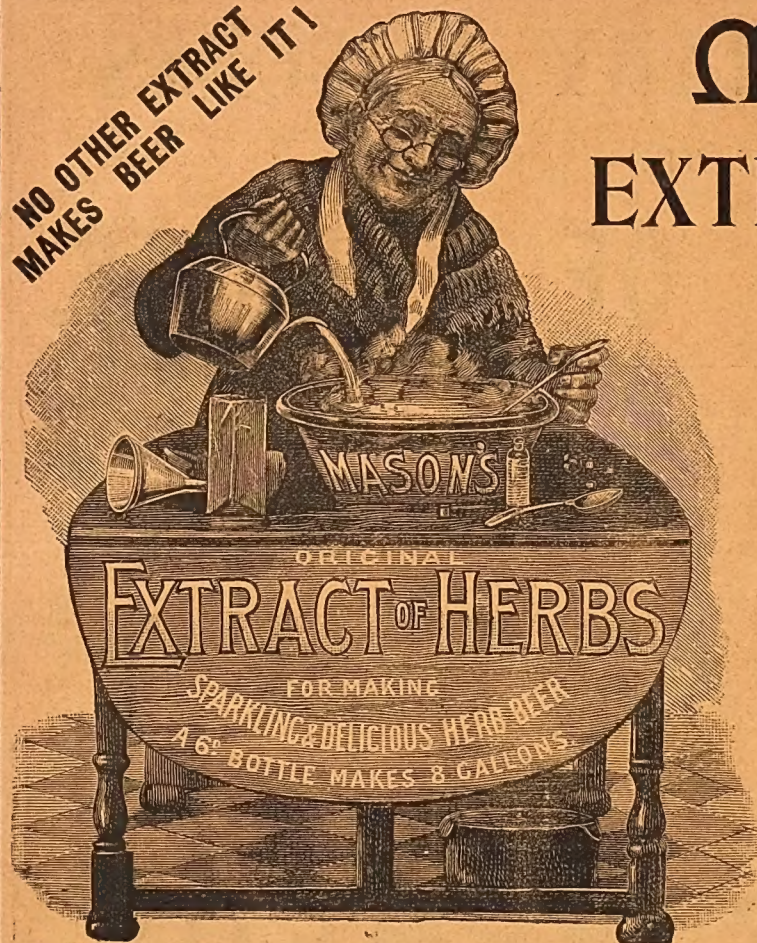
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